

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 EUR-12 AID-05 DPW-01 DHA-02 IGA-02

EB-07 ABF-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 H-02 SS-15

SP-02 OES-03 NSC-05 PRS-01 FDRE-00 NEAE-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 SSO-00 ORM-02 CIEP-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00

LAB-04 SIL-01 AGR-05 PM-04 DODE-00 HEW-02 MED-02 /112 W
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P R 041535Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8489

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USMISSION GENEVA

USUN 3176

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, LE, EAID

SUBJ: LEBANESE EMERGENCY NEEDS

REF: STATE 023177; ROME 1491; ROME 1405; BEIRUT 16 ALL NOTAL

1. REGARDING THE ICRC PROGRAM, AS NOTED IN BEIRUT 0887,
A PLAN COVERING ABOUT 10,000 REFUGEES FROM DAMOUR AND
THE KARANTINA IS INVOLVED. THE KARANTIAN REFUGEES ARE
LOCATED FOR THE MOST PART ALONG THE BEACH AREA KNOWN
AS SULTAN IBRAHIM. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER IS 3000. THE
DAMOUR REFUGEES NUMBER ABOUT 7000 AND ARE LOCATED MAINLY
IN THE KASLIK AREA, WITH AN ADDITIONAL NUMBER (LESS THAN
1000) IN THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN TOWN OF JEZINE. THE
MAIN DISTRIBUTION MECHANISMS ENVISAGED FOR THE ICRC
PROGRAM ARE LEBANESE RED CROSS AND PALESTINIAN RED
CRESCENT, ALONG WITH EXISTING DISPENSARIES FOR MEDICINES.

A USG CONTRIBUTION TO THE ICRC EFFORT WOULD SEEM

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APPROPRIATE.

2. AT THIS STAGE IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS PRESENT AND PROJECTED EMERGENCY NEEDS. HOWEVER, WE HAVE TO ASSUME THERE ARE HOMELESS AND DESTITUTE PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OVER AND ABOVE THOSE 10,000 IN BEIRUT ITSELF. MANY WHO WOULD IN MORE NORMAL TIMES BE ASSISTED BY FAMILY CANNOT COUNT ON SUCH HELP, AT LEAST NOT FOR LONG, UNTIL THE ECONOMY RESUMES AND EMPLOYMENT IMPROVES. WHILE SUCH PEOPLE ARE NOT ACTUALLY GOING HUNGRY, THEIR NEEDS ARE PROBABLY CONSIDERABLE. THEREFORE IN EMBASSY'S

VIEW IT WOULD SEEM REASONABLE TO SAY THAT THERE ARE PERHAPS AS MANY AS 20,000 - 30,000 REFUGEES AND OTHERS MADE DESTITUTE AS A RESULT OF CURRENT DISTURBANCES, DESTRUCTION OF HOMES AND THE ACCOMPANYING ECONOMIC PARALYSIS WHICH HAS MADE MANY PERSONS JOBLESS. WHATEVER THE SOURCE OF TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE AT PRESENT TO THEM, A GOOD CASE EXISTS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY SHORT-TERM EMERGENCY AID.

3. GOL ITSELF IS STILL IN PRELIMINARY STAGES OF ASSESSING IMMEDIATE AS WELL AS LONGER-TERM NEEDS. GOL HAS ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE IN ASSESSING AND MEETING NEEDS FROM THE UN, ARAB LEAGUE AND UNHCR (BEIRUT 1099). DEPARTMENT IS ALSO AWARE OF WFP FOOD PROGRAM HERE AND ARRIVAL OF LATEST EMISSARY FROM THE POPE, TO ASSESS ONGOING CHURCH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. PLANLOADS OF MEDICINE AND FOODSTUFFS (IN MODEST QUANTITIES) ARE ARRIVING MORE FREQUENTLY FROM VARIOUS ARAB AS WELL AS WESTERN EUROPEAN SOURCES, ALONG LINES OF OUR OWN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH AUB DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL.

4. AS FOR AS EMBASSY CAN DETERMINE- AND HERE OUR FIGURES ARE MORE RELIABLE- THERE ARE AMPLE SUPPLIES OF POWDERED MILK, RICE, GRAIN AND OTHER BASIC FOOD SUPPLIES ACTUALLY IN THE COUNTRY. THE PROBLEM IS DISTRIBUTION BOTH IN BEIRUT ITSELF AND IN THE COUNTRYSIDE ONCE SECURITY CONDITIONS PERMIT ACCESS THERE. TO DATE AT LEAST LEBANESE WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS (INCLUDING RED CRESCENT/RED CROSS AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS) HAVE FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS NOT BEEN ABLE TO HANDLE LARGE DISTRIBUTION EFFORTS VERY EFFECTIVELY.

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5. LEBANESE HAVE GENERALLY RELIED HEAVILY ON PRIVATE ENTERPRISE INSTEAD, A CHANNEL IN WHICH MONEY PLAYS KEY ROLE AND READY MONEY IS ONE OF THE COMMODITIES IN SHORT SUPPLY TODAY AMONG NOT ONLY THE NEEDY BUT THOSE WHO OTHERWISE MIGHT HAVE HELPED THEM. THIS MIGHT CHANGE. GOL COMMITTEES HAVE BEEN FORMED ON WHICH REPRESENTATIVES OF ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS LEBANESE ARMY SIT, AND MORE EFFECTIVE DISTRIBUTION MIGHT RESULT THAN IN THE PAST.

BUT IT WILL BE A SLOW PROCESS AND WE SUSPECT VARIOUS ASSISTING GROUPS WILL HAVE TO UNDERTAKE MUCH OF THE DISTRIBUTION THEMSELVES. IN THIS THEY WILL BENEFIT BY COUNTRY'S LARGELY UNDAMAGED INFRASTRUCTURE (I.E. ROADS, ELECTRICITY, WATER, TELEPHONES) SO THAT RECOVERY MAY BE MUCH FASTER IN COMING THAN WOULD BE THE CASE IN A POORER COUNTRY OR ONE WHOSE BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE HAD BEEN MORE GREATLY DISLOCATED. ALL THIS OF COURSE ASSUMES A CONTINUING CEASEFIRE AND GRADUAL MENDING OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS AND GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY.

6. NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE DO NOT BELIEVE USG SHOULD ITSELF GET INVOLVED IN INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION PROCESS HERE. RATHER, USG SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS AFTER STUDY OF EACH PROPOSAL ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS. EMBASSY WOULD EXPECT TO HAVE MORE COMMENTS TO CONTRIBUTE AS TIME REVEALS COUNTRY'S EXACT NEEDS.
LAMBRAKIS

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